



## **Abandoned Boat Procedures**

**STEP 1: CONTACT POLICE:** Contact your local police department or the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) State Environmental Conservation Police. Provide to them the Hull Identification Number (HIN) and registration number of the vessel. The law enforcement officer will determine if the vessel is stolen and will prepare an incident report, a copy of which will be provided to you. The law enforcement officer may take the vessel into custody and store it, but the law does not require it.

**STEP 2: CONTACT LAST OWNER OF RECORD:** To obtain the name and address of the last owner of record, submit to the DMV a completed DMV Form J-23b, along with the \$20 fee and a photocopy of your driver's license for identification. Include on the form the vessel's registration number and HIN. [NOTE: If there is no registration number, HIN or other identifying markings on the boat, the DMV will not be able to determine the last owner of record.] Send to the last owner of record of the vessel a certified letter, return receipt requested, notifying the last owner of record that you found the vessel and request that the last owner of record retrieve the vessel from you or, if you want the vessel, that the last owner of record sell it to you. If you want the vessel and the last owner of record agrees to sell it to you, the last owner of record must provide you with a completed BILL OF SALE indicating that the vessel was sold to you for a reasonable amount. If the last owner of record prefers to give the vessel to you rather than sell it, the last owner of record must provide you with a completed GIFT AFFIDAVIT (DMV Form AU-463), in addition to a BILL OF SALE (specifying a zero dollar amount). If the last owner of record provides you with a BILL OF SALE (and GIFT AFFIDAVIT, if applicable), you may register the vessel in your name at DMV. The vessel is no longer an abandoned vessel.

**STEP 3: LAST OWNER OF RECORD DOES NOT RESPOND TO REQUEST OR OWNER UNKNOWN:** If the last owner of record does not respond to your request or is unknown, you have the right to sell the vessel after storing it for at least 60 days. The date on which you contacted law enforcement, as specified on the incident report, is the start of the 60-day period. Five days before the sale of the vessel, the person storing the vessel is required to send a NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL to the Commissioners of Environmental Protection, Motor Vehicles, and Transportation, and to the vessel owner, if known. If the vessel owner is unknown, the person storing the vessel is required to advertise the sale three times in a newspaper published or having a circulation in the town where the vessel is being stored, beginning at least five days before the sale. The person storing the vessel may sell the vessel to themselves for the costs incurred in storing the vessel.

You should include the following information in the newspaper advertisement and the NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL: point of contact information, including a telephone number; the location at which the vessel was found; a detailed description of the vessel, include the make,

model, type of boat, type of propulsion, name (if any), color, length and any numbers or identifiable marks; and any other information that may help someone to identify the vessel.

**STEP 4: POST-SALE:** After selling the vessel, the person storing it must deduct any costs incurred by law enforcement in taking the vessel into their custody and storing it, if they did so, and by such person in storing the vessel, and distribute the remaining funds from the sale to the owner of the vessel or the owner's legal representative. If the person storing the vessel is not in the business of storing vessels, the person storing the vessel should contact three vessel storage businesses to determine the average cost to store a vessel for the same time period. If the owner or the owner's legal representative does not claim the balance within one year from the date of sale, the balance must be turned over to the state.

**STEP 5: HOW TO REGISTER ABANDONED VESSEL:** To register the vessel, the new owner must provide to the DMV the following documents to prove that the above-stated process was followed:

- Bill of sale
- Copy of the police report, evidencing the date on which law enforcement was contacted
- The return receipt of the certified letter demonstrating that the letter was either accepted by the vessel owner (and they did not respond) or was returned undelivered (if the vessel owner was known)
- Copies of the NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL sent to the Commissioners of Environmental Protection, Motor Vehicles, and Transportation, and to the vessel owner (if the vessel owner was known)
- Letter received from the DEP in response to the NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL, indicating that the vessel has not been reported stolen
- Copies of the newspaper advertisements, or proof of publication, for the sale of the vessel (if the vessel owner was unknown)
- Ownership Affidavit (DMV Form B-203)
- Application for Vessel Registration (DMV Form B-148) and appropriate vessel registration fee

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Boating Division, at (860) 434-8638 or via [e-mail](#).